

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) In a retail system for selling products, a [[A]] system for processing telephone orders comprising:

input telephone circuitry for receiving from a customer an incoming telephone call to place an order for a product from the retail system ~~incoming telephone calls from customers,~~

order processing circuitry for conducting an interactive session with the customer, the order processing circuitry being responsive to order information on the order received from the input telephone circuitry, for producing an order validation request to determine whether the order can be fulfilled ~~conducting an interactive session with a customer to fulfill a request for an order, without intervention of a human operator, and~~

control circuitry responsive to the order validation request from the order processing circuitry, for determining order confirmation information on the requested product and providing the order confirmation information to the order processing circuitry,

if the order confirmation information indicates that the order can be fulfilled, the order processing circuitry producing a first voice message indicating to the customer that the order can be fulfilled,

if the order confirmation information indicates that the order cannot be fulfilled, the order processing circuitry producing a second voice message indicating to the customer that the order cannot be fulfilled

~~configured to interact with the processing circuitry during the interactive session with the customer,~~

~~the order processing circuitry being configured to:~~

~~during the interactive session, receive from the input telephone circuitry an item request indicating an item selected by a customer,~~

~~in response to the item request, supply the control circuitry with an item availability request to determine whether the selected item is available at a time of the item request from the customer,~~

~~receive an availability response indicating whether the selected item is available at the time of the item request, and~~

~~provide the customer, via the input telephone circuitry, with information corresponding to the availability response.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein in response to the order validation request from the order processing circuitry, the control circuitry is configured to provide the order processing circuitry with product availability ~~the customer with the~~ information indicating whether the requested product ~~selected item~~ is available in the retail system, before completing the interactive session.

3. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the order processing circuitry is configured to send to the control circuitry a delivery availability request to determine whether the requested product ~~selected item~~ is available for delivery during a time interval requested by the customer, and the control circuitry is responsive to the delivery availability request by providing the order processing circuitry with delivery availability information indicating whether the requested product is available for delivery during the time interval requested by the customer, before completing the interactive session.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the order processing circuitry is configured to request delivery of the item to a point of sale selected by the customer.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the order processing system is responsive to information identifying the customer for determining a customer's profile indicating preferences of the customer.

6. (Original) The system of claim 5, wherein the customer's profile contain a customer's voice sample for recognizing voice messages received from the customer.

7. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the order processing circuitry is configured to process a customer's voice message associated with the request for an item being ordered.

8. (Original) The system of claim 7, wherein the voice message identifies the requested item.

9. (Original) The system of claim 7, wherein the voice message identifies a requested time interval for delivery.

10. (Original) The system of claim 7, wherein the voice message identifies a requested point of sale.

11. (Original) The system of claim 7, wherein the voice message identifies the customer.

12. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the order processing circuitry is configured to produce a voice message providing the customer with information relating to the request for an item being ordered.

Claims 13-14 (cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 ~~13~~, wherein during the session with the customer, the control circuitry provides the processing circuitry with a customer's profile indicating preferences of the customer.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 ~~13~~, wherein during the session with the customer, the control circuitry provides the processing circuitry with information on a point of sale selected by the customer.

Claim 17 (cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a telephone order for an item comprising:

receiving a telephone call from a customer, and

without intervention of a human operator, conducting an interactive telephone session with the customer to fulfill a request to order the item,

the interactive telephone session including:

receiving from the customer a product request indicating a product selected by the customer,

in response to the product request, generating a product availability request to determine whether the selected product is available at a time of the item request from the customer,

based on a product availability response indicating whether the selected product is available, supplying the customer with a first voice message indicating that the product is available if information corresponding to the product availability response indicates that the product is available, and with a second voice message indicating that the product is not available if the product availability response indicates that the product is not available.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the interactive session includes an exchange of voice messages.

Claim 20 (cancelled)

21. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the interactive session includes determining whether the requested item is available for delivery during a time interval requested by the customer.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (New) The system of claim 1, wherein

if the order for the product selected by the customer cannot be fulfilled, the control circuitry is configured to determine an available product similar to the selected product and to provide information on the similar product to the order processing circuitry, and

the order processing circuitry is configured for producing a voice message suggesting the similar product to the customer.

24. (New) The system of claim 1, wherein

if the order for the product selected by the customer cannot be fulfilled in a time period requested by the customer, the control circuitry is configured for providing the order processing circuitry with alternative time information indicating an alternative time period when the order can be fulfilled, and

in response to the alternative time information, the order processing circuit is configured to produce a voice message indicating to the customer the alternative time period when the order can be fulfilled.

25. (New) The system of claim 1, wherein the order processing circuit is configured to recognize a pre-selected limited number of spoken words, each of which defines a specific procedure performed by the order processing circuitry when a respective word is recognized.